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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

2 November 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL CONTINGENCY
PLANNING COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: CORONA/J Mission #1011, Contingency Incident

CORONA/J mission #1011 was launched 5 October 1964. The mission provided for recovery of two separate SRVs containing exposed film. The first was successfully recovered on 10 October; the second failed to respond to recovery sequence tasking on 13 October 1964 and remained in orbit attached to the second stage Agena rocket which houses the camera equipment. Through telemetry, it was concluded that the ablative shield, which protects the SRV from re-entry heat, became disconnected from the SRV as a result of a safety feature built into the recovery sequence, but nevertheless remained attached to the Agena, thereby providing an ablative housing for the SRV, at least for such time as forces of re-entry might effect a disunion of the ablative shield and the SRV from the Agena.

Re-entry resulted from normal orbital decay and impact was computed as having occurred at 0943Z, 26 October (plus or minus 5 minutes) on revolution 329, vehicle travelling north to south, at [redacted] A visual confirmation of a re-entering object was received from a DEW LINE station at 0941Z. (b)(1) (b)(3)

A special review by NSA has failed to disclose from COMINT sources any unusual activity on the part of the Soviets related to this event. An aircraft search of the predicted impact area was considered but not instituted due to a combination of unfavorable factors: poor lighting conditions (approximately 16 minutes of 4 degree sun angle a day diminishing to zero by 1 November), deteriorating weather conditions and a possible variance of plus or minus 1500 miles of the actual impact point from the predicted 75 degree latitude impact point.

GAMBIT mission #4013 was tasked for camera operation over the predicted impact area on 26 October, however, failure of mission 4013 occurred in connection with recovery operations on 27 October. No further action is anticipated at this time.

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PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES
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JAMES T. STEWART
Brigadier General, USAF
Director
(S) National Reconnaissance
Office Staff

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